

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 337

By Miller L

A RESOLUTION to name U.S. Highway 61 in the City of Memphis in honor of legendary bluesman and guitarist B.B. King.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways to honor those inspirational artists whose work bridges the differences between people from all walks of life to bring us closer to truly attaining the family of man; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the legendary bluesman and guitarist B.B. King; and;

WHEREAS, renowned worldwide as the "King of the Blues," B.B. King has been described as "the preeminent living practitioner of the blues" by *The Washington Post*; and

WHEREAS, unquestionably one of the greatest guitarists in the history of not only the blues, but indeed all of popular music, Mr. King is famous for playing Gibson guitars, especially his beloved Lucille; and

WHEREAS, during his illustrious career, B.B. King has entertained and inspired millions of appreciative music lovers worldwide; and

WHEREAS, Mr. King's many invaluable contributions to the blues and the entire body of American popular music have been recognized by his receipt of thirteen Grammy Awards, including a Lifetime Achievement Grammy; and

WHEREAS, he has also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Kennedy Center Honors, and the NAACP's Blues Image Award on three occasions; and

WHEREAS, 2005 will mark three significant milestones in the remarkable life and singular career of Mr. King; and;

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2005, he will celebrate his 80th birthday, a very special occasion that will serve as the cornerstone of and provide the ultimate musical event for the Memphis 80 Days of Blues campaign; and

WHEREAS, 2005 also marks the 60th anniversary of B.B. King's arrival in Memphis and the 55th anniversary of his first recording with the eminent Sam Phillips in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, in fact, no one personifies Memphis - its grace, its talent, its vitality, its history - more than B.B. King; and

WHEREAS, Mr. King first moved to Memphis on a full-time basis in 1946; and

WHEREAS, his first radio performance was aired on KWEM in West Memphis, Arkansas; however, his first radio show, *King's Spot* was aired on WDIA in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, it was in Memphis that Mr. King first became known as B.B., which was originally short for the nickname of the Beale Street Blues Boy, which was shortened again to the Blues Boy, and finally became simply B.B. ; and

WHEREAS, today, B.B. King is practically synonymous with Beale Street; he has performed on this world famous avenue for more than half a century and he opened his own club there in 1991; and

WHEREAS, Mr. King recorded some of his earliest records with Sam Phillips, first at the Memphis Recording Service and then at the celebrated Sun Records, where his label mates included Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, and Elvis Presley, another King who always respectfully called Mr. King "Sir," to the bluesman's great delight; and

WHEREAS, *Three O'clock Blues*, Mr. King's first number one single on the rhythm and blues charts, was recorded in 1952 in a back room at the Memphis YMCA; and

WHEREAS, because he represents Memphis quite like no one else through his wonderful music, brilliant live performances, and sparkling personality, B.B. King was appointed a Musical Ambassador for Memphis in 2004 by Mayor Willie Herenton; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that this General Assembly should likewise honor B.B. King for his enormous contributions, both musical and otherwise, to the Bluff City and the Volunteer State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that the segment of U.S. Highway 61 in the City of Memphis is hereby designated the "B.B. King Highway" in honor of a singular artist whose music transcends all barriers and who exemplifies the true spirit of the Volunteer State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating U.S. Highway 61 in the City of Memphis as the "B.B. King Highway".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this resolution shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this resolution. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the commissioner of transportation.